



U. S. S. ENGLISH (DD-696)

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Dear Friends

In my last "Family Gram" I mentioned that this was a continuing type program, thus I shall attempt to bring you up to date on "ENGLISH's doings" of the past 6 weeks. Perhaps you might find it interesting to hear a little about the ports we have visited since my last letter, so I'll attempt to pass along the highlights of each visit to you.

We made a short visit to Malta in mid June which proved to be quite interesting. Malta is rich in Mediterranean history having been occupied by almost everyone, but conquered by no one, and the people are quite an independent lot. However, Malta has served as an important British Naval Base since the 1800's. While ENGLISH was there the British Destroyer AGINCOURT was our host, and proved to be a delightful experience, as many of our people had an opportunity to meet and compare notes with destroyer sailors of another country.

Athens was our next stop and here again our experiences proved to be a little bit different than usual. For the six weeks preceding our visit to Athens we had had on board ENGLISH for training and familiarization purposes two Greek officers and four Greek petty officers. When we arrived in Athens these young men just outdid themselves to make our stay a pleasant one. Many of our people were invited into Greek homes as guests. We were made to feel most welcome in Athens and I sincerely feel that all hands thoroughly enjoyed the visit.

The Fourth of July was spent in the French port of Theoule. Theoule is a small village just west of Cannes on the French Riviera. It is nestled right in the mountain side in a rather sleepy sort of way. During the summer however, there are enough BIKINI's on the beach to make Theoule at least open up one eye. As we were anchored in this port we took advantage of the situation and held Swim Call twice daily, 0630-0700 and 1630-1700. This proved to be very popular as it provided a bit of diversion for men who had the duty as they too had an opportunity to swim.

After a very intensive at sea period in which we went charging around with a "bone in our teeth" to complete as many competitive exercises as we could, we returned to Rapallo, Italy for a seven day stay. Since I mentioned Rapallo in my first Family Gram I will only say that we found it equally as delightful on our return as it was during our first visit if not more so.

Least you get the impression from my description of liberty ports that all we do in the Sixth Fleet is visit foreign ports, I would like to take this opportunity to talk a little more about the Sixth Fleet, what it is, what it does, and why we are here.

To start with, the United States has four numbered fleets. The First Fleet and Second Fleet operate off the west and east coasts of the U.S. respectively. The other two, the Seventh Fleet in the Western Pacific and the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, are continuously deployed overseas. The mission of the Sixth Fleet may be stated as follows:

- To help preserve the peace.
- To assure Mediterranean countries of our friendship and readiness to help them.
- To protect and support United States citizens, interest and policies in the Mediterranean area.
- To be prepared to carry out such wartime assignments as superior United States or NATO commands may order.
- To perfect working relationships with our friends and allies.
- To provide realistic wartime training for ships and men of the Navy.

The Sixth Fleet has no shore bases in the Mediterranean. It is a "permanently transient" organization. It is completely mobile and self-sustaining. About 50 percent of the time the Fleet is engaged in training exercises at sea, both U.S. and NATO, as well as occasional bilateral or trilateral exercises with friends and allies, depending on where the center of gravity of the Fleet may be at the time -- east, west or central Mediterranean. The other 50 percent of the time the Fleet spends in visits to approximately 80 ports bordering this inland sea. In a normal year the Fleet will make two complete swings around the Mediterranean, visiting the Eastern Mediterranean in the Spring and fall and Western Mediterranean in the summer and winter. Periods both at sea and in port are generally of about seven days duration.

Ships reporting to the Fleet are expected to have developed certain basic skills, and while some exercise time is allocated for maintaining these skills, the primary emphasis in the Fleet must be on the development of advanced task force and Fleet coordination, culminating periodically in combined operations with our NATO allies.

Among the many skills continually exercised are these involved in air strikes, air defense, antisubmarine warfare, underway replenishment mine warfare and amphibious landing. The many exercises at sea are designed to keep all naval capabilities in offense and defense at a peak of readiness and efficiency.

The entire Fleet, except for the Fleet flagship and three auxiliaries, is based on the east coast of the United States. The Fleet is able to sustain itself continuously at several thousand miles away from home bases through underway replenishment; that is, through the transfer at sea of stores, provisions, fuel, ammunition and other necessities. Developed during World War I and constantly being refined, the system of underway replenishment can be used under both day and night conditions.

Overseas bases are often subject of changing political winds in the host country. Obviously, land bases are also vulnerable to enemy attack. Besides, the Fleet cannot afford to break off its operations and return periodically across many miles of water for replenishing. The ability to operate effectively without such bases is one of the real strengths of the Sixth Fleet. Capable of delivering in a single attack more destructive power than all of that unleashed by all of the air forces combined in World War II, the Sixth Fleet can shift this potential striking force from one end of the Mediterranean to the other without asking permission from anyone. It is a long-legged, free-ranging force. It is thus able to give renewed confidence to our friends and pause to any potential enemy.

At sea the job of the Fleet is to achieve and maintain a peak of combat readiness. In port the mission of the Fleet is to promote goodwill, understanding, respect and acceptance, both through official contacts and through simple people-to-people relationships. Each man in uniform is considered an ambassador of goodwill and respect and is expected to act like one. The high standard of conduct ashore of Sixth Fleet personnel has won the respect of our friends and allies, and the continual presence of this ready Fleet in the Mediterranean has earned respect from those countries which are not friendly to the United States but understand only the meaning of power.

Mindful that one thoughtless man, through irresponsible behavior, can undo the good work of thousands, a great deal of continuing command attention is given to maintaining the high standards of conduct ashore. Before entering a port, ships disseminate to all hands information on the port's place in history, its famous landmarks and the customs and traditions of the people of that particular country.

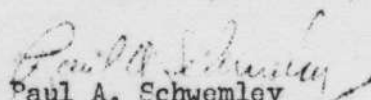
The Fleet has been so active for so long in promoting good international relationships that many of its activities have become institutionalized. In a normal year as many as 1,000 individual shipboard parties will be given for children in ports around the Mediterranean. Sports contests between ship teams and local teams are a common feature of port visits. Exchanges of official calls and entertainment are a fixed part of all visits. Ships of the Fleet are open for visiting in all Mediterranean ports. Ship bands play public concerts before enormous crowds. Blue-jackets of the Fleet can be found on tour in all of the great, historical and interesting cities of Europe.

To provide information about the Fleet to the millions in each country who live at some distance from port cities, and hence do not have the privilege of visiting ships, newsmen from all parts of these countries are invited to visit the Fleet so they may take the story of the Fleet back with them.

Although the motto of the Sixth Fleet is "Power for Peace," activities such as those mentioned above, along with the traditional alacrity of the Fleet in responding to disasters such as earthquakes and floods, and the legendary generosity of the American Bluejacket in helping those in need have won for the Sixth Fleet a reputation as "The Friendly Fleet."

I shall chat with you once more before we turn the bow towards the Straights of Gibraltar and thence Norfolk, a day towards which each of us eagerly looks forward.

Sincerely


Paul A. Schwemley
Commander, U.S. Navy
Commanding Officer